

MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") BOARD MEETING HELD MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2021, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY WITHOUT A PHYSICAL LOCATION, AS AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER DATED MARCH 18, 2020.

**Board Members:** 

Chair Chris Robinson, Mayor Harris Sondak, Mayor Jeff Silvestrini, Mayor Dan Knopp, Mayor Jenny Wilson, Mayor Mike Peterson, Mayor Erin Mendenhall (joined the meeting at 4:00 p.m.), Councilor Marci Houseman, Councilor Jim Bradley, Councilor Max Doilney, Ex-Officio Member Carlton Christensen

Staff:

Executive Director Ralph Becker, CWC Deputy Director Blake Perez, Communications Director Lindsey Nielsen, Office Administrator Kaye

Mickelson

**Attendees:** 

Abi Holt, Robert Sampson, Lisa Hartman, Caroline Rodriguez, Catherine Kanter, Julianna Christie, Laura Briefer, Patrick Nelson, Alex Schmidt, Annalee Munsey, Bob Kollar, Carl Fisher, Colby Hardman, Dennis Goreham, Doug Frey, Gene Carr, Shawn Marquardt, Steve Van Maren, Tara Tannahil, Terry Smith, Holley Mullen, Jenna Malone, Tom Diegel, Jake Young, James Hick, Kyle Maynard, Marion Rice, Mimi Levitt, Newel Jensen, Randy Doyle, Roy Clegg, Barbara Cameron, Chris McCandless, Roger Borgenicht, Sharon, Town of Alta, Helen Peters, T. Warner

#### **OPENING**

1. <u>Commissioner Christopher F. Robinson will Conduct the Meeting as Chair of the Board,</u> (the "Board") of the Central Wasatch Commission ("CWC").

Chair Chris Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

2. The Chair will Read his Written Determination Regarding an Electronic Meeting Anchor Location for this Meeting, Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. 52-4-207(4).

The Legislature, pursuant to Section 52-4-207(4), required the Board to make a determination, which was as follows:

 'I, as the Chair of the Board of Commissioners, the Board of the Central Wasatch Commission hereby determine that conducting board meetings at any time during the next 30 days at an anchor location presents a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present at the anchor location. The World Health Organization, the President of the United States, the Governor of Utah, the Salt Lake County Mayor, and the Health Department have all recognized that a global pandemic exists related to the new strain of the Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Due to the state of emergency caused by the global pandemic, I find that conducting a meeting at an anchor location under the current state of public health emergency constitutes a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present at the location. According to the information and from State epidemiology experts, Utah is currently in an acceleration phase, which has the potential to overwhelm the State's health care system.'

# 3. The Board will Consider Approving the Minutes of the December 7, 2020, CWC Board Meeting.

**MOTION:** Mayor Wilson moved to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2020, CWC Board Meeting. Mayor Silvestrini seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

# 4. The Board will Consider Approving the Minutes of the December 14, 2020, Board Retreat.

**MOTION:** Mayor Knopp moved to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020, CWC Board Retreat. Councilor Houseman seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

# 5. <u>Consideration of Resolution 2021-01 Approving a Replacement Commissioner for Park City.</u>

Chair Robinson reported that Mayor Andy Beerman recently stepped back from the CWC and nominated Park City Council Member, Max Doilney to take his place.

**MOTION:** Mayor Sondak moved to approve Resolution 2021-01 Approving a Replacement Commissioner for Park City. Mayor Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

#### **BUDGET AMENDMENT #1 FOR FY 2020/2021**

1. CWC/Budget/Finance Committee Chair Jeff Silvestrini will Present a Proposed Amendment #1 to the CWC's FY 2020-2021 Budget. (The proposed Budget Amendment, and a Narrative on the Proposed Use of Reserves for the Environmental Dashboard and the Visitor Use Study, are Attached Here or Available on the Central Wasatch Commission Website).

Chair Robinson reported on a budget amendment for the fiscal year 2020-2021. It would allow the use of Central Wasatch Commission ("CWC") reserves to fund the second half of the Environmental Dashboard project and the Visitor Use Study. Chair of the Budget/Finance Committee, Mayor Jeff Silvestrini stated that the amendment proposed \$96,308 from reserves for the Environmental Dashboard and \$35,000 to \$50,000 from reserves to fund a Visitor Use Study.

2. The Board Chair Will Conduct a Public Hearing for the Proposed Budget Amendment.

Notice of the Public Hearing has been Timely Posted on the Public Notice Website and

Published by SLC Media Group in a Newspaper of General Circulation in Salt Lake

County and Summit County.

**MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to open the public hearing on the Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Mayor Knopp seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

Chair Robinson opened the public hearing.

### 3. The Chair will Close the Public Hearing.

There were no public comments.

**MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to close the public hearing on the Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Mayor Knopp seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

# 4. Consideration of Resolution 2021-02 Approving Amendment #1 to the CWC's FY 2020/2021 Budget.

Mayor Mike Peterson supported the Environmental Dashboard and Visitor Use Study. Ex-Officio Member Carlton Christensen believed the Environmental Dashboard and Visitor Use Study would add to future discussions about the canyons. He commended staff for prioritizing those projects.

**MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to adopt Resolution 2021-02 Approving Amendment #1 to the CWC's Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Budget. Mayor Sondak seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

### **COMMITTEE AND PROJECT REPORTS**

1. <u>Executive Committee: Chair Christopher F. Robinson, on Behalf of the Executive Committee, will Discuss the December 21, 2020, Meeting Minutes. Committee Assignments will be Confirmed.</u>

Chair Robinson reported that there would be meetings twice a month for the next 90 days in an effort to reach a consensus on a Mountain Transportation System ("MTS") by April 5, 2021. CWC Executive Director, Ralph Becker noted that most Board Members responded to requests related to potential dates for interim meetings. He asked any who had not to reach out to staff. The dates would be determined following the current CWC Board Meeting.

Chair Robinson reviewed the CWC Committee Assignments:

- Executive Committee:
  - o Chair Robinson, Mayor Wilson, Mayor Peterson, and Mayor Mendenhall;
- Budget/Finance Committee:
  - o Mayor Silvestrini, Mayor Sondak and Councilor Bradley;

- Legislative/Land Tenure Committee:
  - o Mayor Wilson, Mayor Silvestrini, Mayor Sondak and Mayor Mendenhall;
  - Transportation Committee:
    - o Mayor Knopp, Mayor Peterson, Councilor Doilney and Ex-Officio Member Christensen; and
  - Short-Term Projects Committee:
    - o Councilor Bradley, Councilor Houseman, and Councilor Doilney.

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**MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to approve the Committee Assignments, as presented. Mayor Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

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### **MOUNTAIN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DISCUSSION**

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#### 1. Review Work Plan, Timeline, and Decision Matrix.

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CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez shared the timeline and work plan related to the MTS. The CWC agreed to spend the first quarter of 2021 gathering additional information on the transportation modes, demand management strategies, and Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS alternatives. Mr. Perez overviewed the timeline as follows:

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- January 4, 2021:
  - o Review UDOT Alternatives (June 8, 2020, and November 2020 Report and Fact Sheet);
- Mid-January, 2021:
  - o Bus discussion (EIS Alternative 1 and 2);
- February 1, 2021:
  - o Rail discussion (EIS Alternative 5);
  - Mid-February, 2021:
    - o Aerial Gondola discussion (EIS Alternative 3 and 4);
  - March 1, 2021:
    - o UDOT EIS team discussion;
- Mid-March, 2021:
  - o Commissioner Summit to affirm Staff recommendations/MTS Summit conclusions against objectives and attributes;
  - o Staff will complete a draft evaluation matrix prior to the summit;
  - o CWC Board will complete the evaluation matrix; and
- April 5, 2021:
  - o CWC Board will make a recommendation on the MTS.

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Mr. Perez shared the evaluation matrix and explained that it was developed to utilize the conditions, attributes, and objectives discussed by the CWC. The evaluation matrix would be used as a worksheet for Board Members as the various modes and alternatives were evaluated. Mr. Perez outlined a number of assignments included in the evaluation matrix as follows:

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- 0: Does not meet condition;
- 1: Good;
- 2: Better; and

• 3: Best.

 The first column in the evaluation matrix included notes and comments. The second column included conditions and factors discussed at the December 7, 2020, CWC Board Meeting and CWC Board Retreat. The next column identified the objectives and attributes approved by the CWC in early 2020. The following column related to the transportation alternatives and included hyperlinks to fact sheets. The goal was for staff and the Board Members to use the evaluation matrix over the next few months as a worksheet. It would be finalized in the spring to help reach a consensus.

The following UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS Alternatives were shared:

- Enhanced bus;
- Enhanced bus with roadway widening;
- Cog rail from the La Caille Base Station;
- Aerial gondola from the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon; and
- Aerial gondola from the La Caille Base Station.

Chair Robinson reported that the evaluation matrix was sent to Board Members on December 22, 2020. He asked that they keep the evaluation matrix in mind as the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS is reviewed and discussed.

Mayor Harris Sondak noted that some of the hyperlinks in the evaluation matrix were not working properly. Chair Robinson asked that they be corrected. Catherine Kanter wondered how the conditions, factors, and values related to the objectives and attributes in the evaluation matrix. She asked why two sets of standards were listed. Chair Robinson commented that they were all intended to analyze the transportation alternatives. Mr. Perez added that a lot of work had been done at the beginning of 2020 to determine the objectives and attributes. Staff felt it was important that they remain part of the evaluation process.

Councilor Jim Bradley mentioned the values established in the Mountain Accord. He believed a lot of thought and consideration had gone into them. There may be specific values from the Mountain Accord that Board Members should review. Councilor Bradley suggested those values be examined. There could be discussions about how the various transportation modes compared to those values. Chair Robinson believed staff should determine the values from the Mountain Accord. They could be reviewed at a subsequent meeting and Staff could incorporate those values into the evaluation matrix. He noted that the evaluation matrix would not be used at the current meeting but Board Members should think about it as the discussions continue.

Councilor Marci Houseman believed the values in the Mountain Accord had been brought up during discussions related to overall values and attributes. However, the review process presented the opportunity to create a clear connection and ensure that there was a shared understanding. Councilor Bradley posed a number of questions to the Board including the following:

- Which is driving which?
- Are the transportation modes driving our process?
- Or is there a core value that needs the be brought up first?

Mr. Becker commented that the values of the Mountain Accord were at the heart of the CWC work. Staff could add a specific column or link to the Mountain Accord values in the evaluation matrix. Chair Robinson liked that suggestion.

## 2. Review UDOT Alternatives – June 8 Report and November Report and Fact Sheet.

Chair Robinson asked the Board to share comments or observations related to the UDOT Alternatives. Councilor Houseman appreciated that UDOT included the specific reasons an alternative was or was not moved forward. She found it interesting that with the exception of cog rail if there were alternatives that already accomplished certain objectives, an additional alternative was not considered. The reason that cog rail would continue to be looked at was because UDOT had a desire to have diverse transportation options.

 Mayor Silvestrini noted that the criteria used to consider different options may not have been consistent throughout. He suggested that the Board Members determine whether the rejected transportation modes were evaluated with the same criteria as the transportation modes that were passed through to phase one. It was noted that the cog rail system had been eliminated in the initial June 8, 2020 report but had been added to the November 20, 2020 addendum.

Mayor Peterson expressed concerns about parking and felt there may be unintended consequences of the La Caille Base Station. He wondered whether UDOT had fully considered the potential impacts to Wasatch Boulevard. Chair Robinson reported that the La Caille Base Station option would include approximately 1,500 parking stalls. An additional 1,000 parking stalls would be needed in order to remove the desired 2,500 vehicles from the roadways. The proposed solution was 600 parking stalls at the gravel pit and 400 parking stalls at the park and ride lot at 9400 South and Highland Drive. Chair Robinson believed the relationship between transportation and parking was key. He also noted that the November 20, 2020 report was the most current and comprehensive. It focused largely on improving winter mobility. Summer mobility was not really evaluated.

Laura Briefer noted that the primary screening criteria in the EIS did not include watershed impacts. It was considered a secondary screening criterion. She commented that transportation options would fundamentally change the way that people move and recreate within the canyon. Agencies like the Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities and the U.S. Forest Service would be looking for insight about the transportation modes and how they would impact use. Mayor Knopp pointed out that the current transportation system was not working and needed to be addressed. He added that most of the modes were scalable and could be added to or reduced as needed. Mayor Knopp noted that it was important to address summer use as well as winter use.

Mayor Sondak reported that the footnote on the screening table located on page 38 of the November 20, 2020 report assumed there were 1.89 passengers per vehicle during the peak hour. This was based on occupancy counts conducted in 2018. Mayor Sondak did not believe the Board should make that assumption and noted that the actual occupancy numbers may be higher or lower. Mayor Erin Mendenhall reiterated the importance of watershed protection. She felt the management of the selected transportation system was just as important as the system itself. Mayor Jenny Wilson agreed.

Ms. Kanter expressed concerns about the path of travel for the La Caille Base Station modes. Both the aerial gondola and cog rail appeared to be travelling over a trail north of State Road 210. Chair

Robinson noted that there were lands preserved by Utah Open Lands. He felt that the proposed placement of the transportation systems would need to be clarified. Mayor Peterson reported that he communicated with UDOT about the 26 acres of land and had shared his objections. UDOT was likely looking at moving forward without that parcel. He shared that the land was a high priority concern for him. Mayor Peterson echoed concerns shared by Ms. Briefer about potential watershed and environmental impacts.

Councilor Houseman commented that Sandy City was focused on potential impacts to the watershed. Additionally, anything that happened at the mouth of the canyon would impact the city. She felt it was important that Sandy City be included in conversations related to congestion. Councilor Houseman asked about UDOT's ability to restrict parking. Chair Robinson and Mayor Knopp believed UDOT could restrict parking on the side of the road fairly easily. However, Chair Robinson noted that they could not necessarily control resort parking or parking on third-party properties. Councilor Houseman mentioned an alternative that had not been considered due to the inability to restrict parking. She offered to double-check and report back to the Board.

Mayor Sondak noted that the Town of Alta is fairly condensed in terms of space. He wondered how much flexibility there would be with details related to transportation hubs, railways, and other transportation alternatives. Mayor Knopp believed many of the questions being brought up would be better answered when the mode experts were present. Mr. Becker commented that the questions were beneficial. Staff could ensure the mode experts were prepared to answer common questions.

Ex-Officio Christensen referred to Mayor Knopp's comment about the transportation modes being scalable. He clarified that buses would not be as scalable due to logistics and support issues. Chair Robison agreed and made note of Ex-Officio Christensen's comment.

Chair Robinson highlighted sections from the November 20, 2020 report. He asked Mr. Perez to share the report with the CWC Board Meeting participants. Page 35, section 4.2.2.3 – Level 1 Screening, showed all of the alternatives that had been eliminated. Chair Robinson went over the Cog Rail Refinement – Canyon Floor Alignment with the Board. He noted that there may have been good reasons not to go along the canyon floor. However, if it went on the north side of State Road 210 instead, there were many challenges, such as overhead wire concerns and extra snowsheds. Chair Robinson reported that the initial UDOT analysis involved an overhead catenary. The revised approach was diesel-electric powered cog rail. Two options related to the Canyon Floor Alignment were shared. They included:

- Temple Quarry Trail; and
- Mountain Accord Alignment.

The Temple Quarry Trail followed an old rail alignment that was now a hiking trail. To preserve the area as a trail and still have the rail alignment, there would need to be substantial earthwork. It would also require fencing, which would disrupt mountain bicyclists, canyon users, and wildlife. That alignment would go through the Tanner Flats Campground and eliminate 10 out of 37 campsites. It was noted that the campground was also a Section 4(f) property.

The Mountain Accord Alignment would follow State Road 210 up the canyon until Lisa Falls and run along the canyon floor. That alignment would be adjacent to Little Cottonwood Creek and would run through the Tanner Flats Campground. Like the Temple Quarry Trail, it would also remove 10

out of the 37 campsites. UDOT stated that for those reasons, both options for the Canyon Floor Alignment had been eliminated from further consideration. Chair Robinson wondered whether the assumptions that led UDOT to eliminate rail along the canyon floor were correct. If so, it may be easy to eliminate that particular option from consideration.

Chair Robinson felt that snowsheds would drastically impact the nature of the canyon. Discussions were had about how snow removal would be handled with a rail system in place. On page 27, under the section, Canyon Alignment Option – Cog Rail at Canyon Entrance and on the North Side of State Road 210, the estimated cost of a cog rail system was listed as approximately \$517 million. However, UDOT listed additional costs to consider and believed the cost would be closer to \$987 million without the widening of Wasatch Boulevard.

Ms. Kanter pointed out that there was a reference in the document about the impact on the Wasatch Resort residential area. She asked for more information. Mayor Knopp explained that one option had been to go up on the road to get past the Wasatch Resort neighborhood and then drop down onto the Temple Quarry Trail. That would miss all avalanche paths and wilderness areas as well as eliminate the need for snowsheds. Chair Robinson explained that there were impacts to all of the proposed alternatives. The analysis from UDOT had eliminated the canyon floor for rail. He noted that this may be the right decision but it forced the entire rail alignment to the north side of State Road 210. That decision would create other challenges, such as snowsheds.

Chair Robinson reviewed the table on page 38 of the latest UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS as well as the alternatives that moved forward to Level 2 Screening. He wondered whether there was a transportation option that would remove more than 30% of the vehicles from the road. Chair Robinson reminded Board Members that the MTS was intended to be for all users. He asked if whistle stops would be feasible. Mayor Knopp noted that the proposed cog rail would have whistle stops but the aerial gondola system would not.

Mayor Wilson felt it was beneficial for the CWC to try to get ahead of the UDOT process. However, she noted that the entity that had the ability to provide resources was also the entity that the CWC was attempting to influence. She stated that her priority was a transportation system with a low impact on the environment and water quality. Mayor Wilson added that funding was also a priority. The more expensive the chosen transportation alternative was, the harder it would be to fund.

Chair Robinson felt it was important for the CWC to ask questions and challenge assumptions. For instance, the Section 4(f) property. If the canyon floor was eliminated as an option because of Section 4(f), that could be dealt with through legislation. If it was eliminated due to additional factors, UDOT may be correct in their decision to remove it from consideration. It was important to consider the various tradeoffs. Chair Robinson wondered whether there was a way to disperse parking and have it tie in with the existing FrontRunner and TRAX systems. That could prevent visitors from congregating at the mouth of the canyon and La Caille.

 Ms. Briefer commented that adding infrastructure to the canyon floor would be risky from a water resource and water management perspective. She noted that snowsheds have an impact but there may be greater impacts to consider as well. Ms. Briefer added that she had questions about the impact of an aerial gondola system. There would need to be additional maintenance roads and infrastructure constructed in order for gondola operations to be feasible.

Chair Robinson discussed the scope of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. He reported that it was focused on winter mobility. It would not relate to summer mobility or the bigger transportation picture. The role of the CWC was to determine whether the UDOT scope was too narrow. Mayor Peterson believed the 2021 timeline was designed to give the CWC additional information. He was anxious to hear the mode experts discuss the proposals in more detail and answer some of the Board Member questions.

Councilor Doilney expressed concerns about the UDOT goal to remove 30% of vehicles from the road for the winter season. He made note of the high levels of growth that had been seen recently. Councilor Doilney believed it was critical to remove more vehicles than that from the road. If the CWC was going to make a recommendation to UDOT, he felt it needed to be more aggressive.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Robinson opened the public comment period.

 Steve Van Maren agreed with Councilor Doilney's statement. He commented that the objective was to make sure the canyon was operational in 2050. Reducing vehicles by 30% wouldn't be enough to do that. Mr. Van Maren felt it was important to realize that there needed to be a solution for today as well as a long-term solution. He suggested buses as a short-term solution and a high-capacity alternative to address future needs.

There were no further comments. Chair Robinson closed the public comment period.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENT**

There were no Commissioner Comments.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Central Wasatch Commission Board Meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

1 I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Board Meeting held Monday, January 4, 2021.

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# 4 <u>Terí Forbes</u>

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9 Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_